

# Home on the Range

Looking for a unique way to unwind? Shed your cosmopolitan persona and spend a few days at a Texas guest ranch. With acres of natural beauty and plenty of creature comforts, these getaways offer experienced ranch hands who can have you riding the range in no time.

## North Texas

For a rustic Western experience softened by modern amenities, consider [Wildcatter Ranch](#), just 90 minutes northeast of Fort Worth. The ranch covers 1,500 acres of rolling green hills that overlook the Brazos River, and offers a long list of activities for adults and families designed to provide as much, or as little, participation as you like.

When you arrive at the ranch, settle in by taking a stroll along the tree-shaded hiking trails, taking a dip in the infinity-edge pool or meeting some fellow ranchers at the Dinner Bell restaurant. You'll be ready to cowboy up in no time, and daily trail rides allow guests to put their seats in a saddle and explore the farther reaches of ranchland. Have no fear if you're a rookie, knowledgeable cowboys help each rider find a horse that matches his or her experience.

Afternoons at Wildcatter can be spent any number of ways, from sport clay shooting and archery to massages at Sage, the on-site spa. At sunset, hop aboard a wagon and ride out into the field to feed the cattle. If you're lucky they might even nibble from the palm of your hand.

## Central Texas

Called the "Cowboy Capital of Texas," the town of [Bandera](#) and the surrounding hills encompass about a dozen ranches that give guests an authentic taste of the cowpoke lifestyle.

The [Sugar & Spice Ranch](#) is located a short drive north of Bandera on 1,000 acres of gorgeous Hill Country terrain. It is a working ranch, making it a great place for visitors to experience real Western-style fun. In addition to horse riding lessons and trail rides, guests learn how to care for the horses, from brushing them down to putting on their blankets, saddles and bridles. Visitors enjoy eating communal meals with other guests, spending time cooling off in the swimming pool, and even attending local rodeos. Proving that Bandera is for cowgirls as well as cowboys, the ranch offers all inclusive "Women-Only Weekends" which include meals, accommodations and activities.

Another of Bandera's iconic dude ranches is [Rancho Cortez](#), which offers activities fit for the entire family, including hay rides, campfires, cattle roundups, trail rides, lasso lessons and down time relaxing at the pool or hot tub. [Silver Spur Guest Ranch](#) is an additional area favorite, and a trip to its historic Hill County property includes outdoor barbecues, cowboy breakfasts and fossil digging, along with trail riding and other traditional dude ranch activities. At the [Mayan Dude Ranch](#), take part in trail rides covering the ranch's 348 acres. The ranch has been owned and operated by the Hicks family for over half a century, and guests enjoy a variety of festive events during their stay, such as the Mayan Pool Party, Texas Boot night, Home on the Range night and 'Best in the West' cowboy Olympics.

## Southeast Texas

About an hour northwest of Houston is Washington County, an idyllic part of the state that's awash in huge live oak trees, fields of wildflowers, and charm-drenched small towns. Here, visitors find peace and quiet at the [BlissWood Bed & Breakfast Inn](#), located on a 650-acre working ranch in Cat Spring just north

of Brenham. The guesthouse has country antiques and comfy rocking chairs, must-haves for any authentic guest ranch getaway. Activities include bass fishing (catch-and-release) on the stocked lake or horseback riding across picture-perfect meadow. Guests are encouraged to venture to the nearby Chappell Hill Lavender Farm, where visitors can cut fresh lavender straight from the fields as well as peruse the gift shop for lovely gift items such as body lotion, bath salts and linen spray. In addition to the ranch's horses, many other exotic animals call the ranch home, including alpacas, camels, antelopes, peacocks and bison. The animals can be seen during horseback rides or on evening walks around the property.

If you're ready to hit the trails for a fun-filled escape, simply pack your favorite blue jeans and mosey over to one of Texas' many welcoming guest ranches. With activities to boot, and plenty of time for relaxation, too, you're sure to enjoy your Western experience.